

STATE OF DELAWARE
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM
Qualification and Registration

Recognizing the growing diversity of people who appear before and utilize the Delaware courts, and in order to ensure equal access to all persons before the court, the Supreme Court of the State of Delaware issued Administrative Directive 107 on the 4th day of April, 1996 charging the Administrative Office of the Courts with the responsibility to develop and administrate a Court Interpreter Program.

QUALIFICATION PROCESS

Orientation Seminar

The Orientation Seminar is a two-day seminar that introduces the candidates to the court interpreter profession. The seminar covers the role of the court interpreter, ethical requirements of the profession, the modes of interpretation as well as an overview of criminal judicial procedure.

Orientations are given a total of four times a year, twice in spring and twice in the fall, in New Castle and Sussex Counties.

Written Examination

The written examination is the second step in the credentialing process. It consists of 135 multiple choice questions in English. The written test measures candidate's knowledge of: a) the English language; b) court-related terms and usage; and c) court interpreter ethics and professional conduct. The test will be administered once or twice a year, following the Orientation Seminar.

Only Candidates who have attended an Orientation Seminar may take this test. Candidates must score at least 75% on the written test in order to proceed with the next step in the registration process.

Candidates who work in a language for which there isn't an oral proficiency test must take the written test and score a minimum of 80% in order to be included in the active Court Interpreter Registry.

Criminal Background Check

Upon receipt of application, the AOC will submit candidate's information to DELJIS for a criminal background check. Only those candidates that pass the criminal check will be allowed to interpret in the Delaware Courts. The AOC will notify candidates only if there is a negative result.

Interpreter photo ID badges will be issued to Certified and Conditionally Approved Interpreters only. They are for exclusive use in the Delaware courthouses. Interpreter shall not represent that the ID badge in any way implies employment with the State of Delaware Judiciary.

Oral Performance Exam

The Consortium oral performance examination test is “designed to determine whether candidates possess the minimum levels of language knowledge and interpreting skills required to perform competently during court proceedings.”¹ The test measures candidate’s command of his/her language pair as well as interpreting skills in the three modes of interpretation: simultaneous, consecutive and sight translation.

Candidates may be tested in any of the languages available through the National Center of State Courts.

The exam consists of four separate sections:

- Sight translation of a document written in English into the oral foreign language.
- Sight translation of a document written in the foreign language into oral English.
- Consecutive interpretation of oral testimony from English into foreign language and from foreign language into English.
- Simultaneous interpreting from English into foreign language.

For more information on the test, visit

http://ncsconline.org/D_Research/CourtInterp/Res_CtInte_7OverviewoftheOralExam.pdf

Minimum qualification for Certification is a score of 70% overall and on each of the four sections of the exam.

The AOC may consider a Candidate’s request for a rescoring of his/her oral performance exam under these circumstances:

- The candidate requests rescoring within 45 days from the date when AOC mailed test scores.
- Candidate scored a minimum of 65% on each portion of the exam.
- Candidate covers all cost associated with the rescore. (Note: rescoring is costly.)

COURT INTERPRETER REGISTRY

A Registry of all interpreters-spoken language and deaf/hard of hearing- will be maintained in the Administrative Office of the Courts and will be updated annually or as necessary. In order to remain in the Registry, interpreter must comply with all steps and requirements of the registration process as outlined in this Policy. An interpreter on the Court Interpreter Registry who no longer wishes to provide services to the courts must ask the Administrative Office of the Courts, in writing, to have his/her name removed.

There are three registration levels for spoken language court interpreters in Delaware:

- 1) Certified Interpreter
- 2) Conditionally-Approved Interpreter
- 3) Registered Candidate

¹ Overview of the Oral Performance Examination for Prospective Court Interpreters. Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification, National Center for State Courts. 2000,2005.

A Certified Interpreter is that candidate who:

- Attended a two-day ethics, judicial procedure and skills-building Orientation seminar.
- Successfully completed a criterion-based written examination.
- Passed a criminal background check as required by the Judicial Branch.
- Submitted the AOC application with a copy of the most recent CV.
- Passed a 3-part oral performance examination in his/her particular language combination with a minimum score of 70% overall and in each of the 3 sections independently.
- Submitted a copy of a W-9 form, included a copy of Delaware business license for Professional Services and renews said license on a yearly basis.
- Complies with the Continuing Education Credit requirements described in the Continuing Education Policy of March 2006.
- Abides by the Court Interpreter Code of Professional Ethics.
- Has signed acknowledgement of receipt and agreement with Court Interpreter Policies and Procedures sheet.

Certified Interpreters from other jurisdictions who have attained certification through another Consortium member state, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts or NAJIT and who wish to work in Delaware may apply for reciprocity. In order to be accepted and included in the Court Interpreter Registry, Interpreter must submit a letter, in State letterhead, from the Program Manager of the state in which he/she obtained certification verifying that interpreter attended a two-day Orientation and has complied with the state's credentialing or qualifying process as well as include copies of the written and oral proficiency examination scores. The applicant interpreter must then attend a Delaware Orientation, agree to the Uniform Payment Rate and comply with Delaware Court Interpreter policies.

A Conditionally Approved interpreter is that candidate who:

- Attended a two-day ethics, judicial procedure and skills-building Orientation seminar.
- Successfully completed a criterion-based written examination.
- Passed a criminal background check as required by the Judicial Branch.
- Submitted the AOC application with a copy of the most recent CV.
- Sat for the 3-part performance examination in his/her particular language combination and obtained a minimum **overall** score of 60%, by scoring a minimum of 70% in at least one section, and a minimum score of 55% in the remaining sections.
- Submitted a W-9 form, included a copy of Delaware business license for Professional Services and renews said license on a yearly basis.
- Complies with the Continuing Education Credit requirements described in the Continuing Education Policy of March 2006.
- Abides by the Court Interpreter Code of Professional Ethics.
- Has signed acknowledgement of receipt and agreement with Court Interpreter Policies and Procedures sheet.

A Conditionally Approved interpreter must take those sections of the oral examination which he/she did not pass once a year until he/she passes. Partial exam scores are only valid for two years. On the third attempt, Conditionally Approved Interpreter shall take **all three sections** of the oral performance exam. If after three

attempts the Conditionally Approved Interpreter does not reach the Certified Interpreter category, said interpreter may have to submit proof of training additional to that required under CE Policy before taking the oral performance test a forth time.

A **Registered Candidate** is any person who has expressed interest in the profession of court interpreting and:

- Attended a two-day ethics, judicial procedure and skills-building Orientation seminar.
- Successfully completed a criterion-based written examination.
- Passed a criminal background check as required by Judicial Branch.
- Submitted the AOC application with a copy of the most recent CV.
- Abides by the Court Interpreter Code of Professional Ethics.
- Has signed acknowledgement of receipt and agreement with Court Interpreter Policies and Procedures sheet.

Registered Candidates have two years to complete requirements under Conditionally Approved Interpreters; Otherwise, Candidate may start the credentialing process anew only after submitting proof of additional training in court interpreting.

American Sign Language interpreters are included under their own listing in the Court Interpreter Registry. All RID (National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf) certified interpreters must provide proof of their certification to the AOC with their application. For hearing deaf interpreter, either a SC:L, CI, CT, CSC, or OIC:C certification. In the case of Deaf interpreters, either CLIP or CDI certifications.

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

As part of the Registration process, interpreter will complete a W-9 form and send said form to AOC with their application. Interpreters may not be contracted until a W-9 form has been processed. Freelance interpreters must also obtain a State of Delaware, Division of Revenue business license for Professional Services and must renew said license on a yearly basis. Interpreter is aware that AOC fiscal department automatically purges any W-9 information that has been inactive during the previous 12 consecutive months.

Interpreter must fill a Request for Payment form for the corresponding court after every assignment. Interpreter shall:

- Write and sign name on the Request for Payment Form.
- At end of assignment, write name(s) and case number(s) of all persons for whom interpreting services were provided if court personnel for a particular Court does not have access to this information.
- Always obtain court official or personnel signature in specified line at end of assignment.
- Leave original, completed and signed form with corresponding Court personnel. Ask for a copy for his/her personal records.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Effective July 2006, **ALL** spoken language Delaware interpreters who are registered with the Administrative Office of the Courts must complete 12 hours of continuing education every three years. Of these 12 credits, at least 3 must be on Ethics and 3 others on skills building on modes of interpretation.

CE credits may be obtained through programs approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts such as, and among others, the Consortium for State Court Interpreters Certification Skills Building Workshops, NAJIT/ATA conferences, educational programs offered by colleges or universities, or training programs offered by other Consortium member states. Interpreter must submit course information for approval from the Coordinator of the Court Interpreter Program 30 days prior to attending in order to ensure course meets CE requirements. Some of the educational areas in which an interpreter may obtain CE credits are:

1. Modes of interpretation - (language or non language-specific)
2. Language development- specialized/technical vocabulary.
3. Professional ethics.
4. Courtroom protocol.
5. Law and judicial procedure.

Interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing must complete the RID required 8.0 CEUs (80 hours) in a cycle (4-years). These eight CEUs are divided into two Content Areas: Professional Studies and General Studies. Participants must work with an RID-Approved Sponsor to earn CEU credits.

The Interpreter must report all continuing education credits earned to the Coordinator of the Delaware Court Interpreter Program within 60 days of completion of the course. The Coordinator will, in turn, keep track of the continuing education credits for each interpreter and send an annual report in January of each year. CE credits may not carryover after the 3 year period ends. The first reporting period will be from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2009.

Failure to complete the required CE credits in the prescribed period (three year for language interpreters and four for Deaf/hard of hearing) will result in the removal of the interpreter's name from the active Court Interpreter Registry maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

Delaware is in the process of adopting a discipline policy for court interpreters.